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ABSTRACT

Recognizing that the interest in improving basic skills in public education presents another opportunity for parents to become educators of their children, this sourcebook offers parents suggestions for initiating and continuing their involvement with the basic education of their children in grades 1 through 8. The guide is divided into sections appropriate to children aged 5 to 8 years, 9 to 11 years, and 12 to 13 years, with emphasis on children 9 to 13 years old. Each chapter begins with a discussion of the emotional changes children experience during the developmental stage discussed, then covers specific skills appropriate for children in that age group under the headings of mathematics, reading, communication, study habits, and coping. (The chapter for 5- to 8-year-olds provides only an overview of the emotional and academic changes of children.) Each chapter also has a section called "Happenings at Home," which suggests activities parents can do at home with their children. Also included is a chapter addressing computer literacy and test taking. The sourcebook concludes with a list of resource materials. (HTH)

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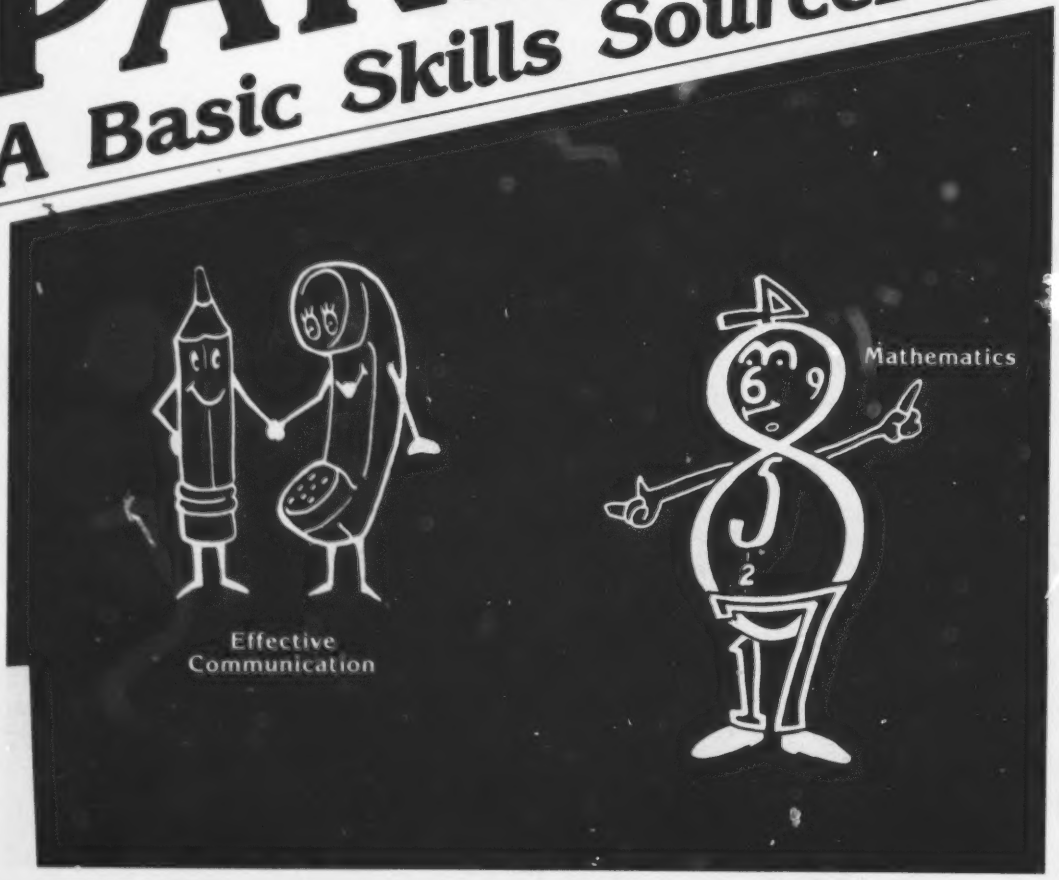
# PARENTS

## A Basic Skills Sourcebook

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# PARENTS — A Basic Skills Sourcebook

*Prepared for the*
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U.S. Department of Education
*by*
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1320 Fenwick Lane
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# Foreword

During the '70s, public concern about the quality of education provided by the public school system led to a "back to basics" movement that focused on students' development of skills in reading, mathematics, and communications. This broad public concern for improvement in education led to the congressional enactment of Public Law 95-961, Title II, Basic Skills Improvement Act. The Basic Skills legislation encourages federal, state, and local education agencies "to utilize all available resources to improve instruction so that all children are able to master the basic skills of reading, mathematics and effective communication, both oral and written." Section 209 of the Act specifically authorizes the Secretary of Education to collect and analyze information about the results of activities carried out under Title II and under Part C of Title IV.

The U.S. Department of Education, in keeping with established program priorities under Title II, has sought to provide information and materials to parents who are interested in helping their children acquire basic skills during elementary and middle school years. This Sourcebook recognizes the importance of parents as educators and provides resources to enhance parents' effectiveness in this role.

Parents are the first and crucial educators of their children. The efforts of parents to socialize and nurture their children establishes a unique and lasting bond. Even as the sphere of adults who become significant in the life of a child broadens, the bond established between parent and child remains dominant. Children allow parents prerogatives withheld from others, and parents understand children as no one else does. This unique relationship forms the basis for the unparalleled effectiveness of parents as educators of their children.

The emphasis to improve basic skills in public education presents another opportunity for parents to become educators of their children. Many parents, however, are not fully aware of what their children are being taught, and modern technology and innovations in education have put many parents out of touch with current classroom methods. In addition, growing numbers of parents work outside the home and have limited time to work with their children.

It becomes apparent that parents need a resource that helps them to improve their overall effectiveness as educators of their children, a resource that:

- gives them procedures for effective child-parent interactions,
- helps them use whatever time they have available to bridge the gap between school and home, and
- contains references to other sources of information on basic skills and parent-child relationships.

This publication is a resource that offers parents suggestions for initiating and continuing their involvement with the basic education of their children in grades 1–8.

**Basic Skills Improvement Program**
**U.S. Department of Education**



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Thirty families across the nation reviewed the usefulness and practicality of the Sourcebook during the spring of 1982. We appreciate their interest, candor, and cogent remarks.

Special thanks are extended to Ms. Ann Parks, Director, Information Center, at the National Office of Parents Without Partners, and Dr. Rudolph Wiggins, a private consultant, for providing materials and suggestions to the staff at the beginning of the project.

Perhaps the most important acknowledgment is of the many documents used in the preparation of this guide. The staff reviewed more than 200 books, pamphlets, and other materials produced by national and local practitioners and experts in the field of education for the Sourcebook's principles of basic skills education and child growth and development.

Sincere appreciation is also given to the Executive Officers of Research Assessment Management, Inc. Dr. Adrienne McCollum, President, offered on-going support and administrative guidance. Dr. Kellene U. Bruce, Executive Vice President, served as Corporate Monitor for this project. In her role as ombudsman, she provided excellent oversight, input, and encouragement to the project staff on the following page.

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# Introduction

## Before You Begin. . .

The major goal of education is to assist children to become fully functioning citizens. As they plan for their children's education, parents have concerns about helping their children achieve that goal.

As parents, you face many concerns in real-life situations daily. Although each situation will be different and each of us will handle it in our own way, a general guide that suggests **"things to do"** can be helpful in many of these situations. That is why this guide was written. It addresses the physical and emotional changes that occur as children grow and how these changes affect children as they encounter new skills in school. Perhaps most important, it reassures us that certain kinds of behavior can be expected at different ages and at different stages of our children's development. We hope this information will help parents answer their common question, **"What's happening to my child?"**

Families today come in many different sizes and combinations. Although we use the term **"parents,"** this guide has been written for everyone in the home who is responsible for the care, training, and guidance of young minds. It contains a summary of research on child growth and development, basic skills curricula, and suggestions for parent involvement in learning activities. Its purpose is to pull together each of these broad areas in one concise, useful guide and to help you answer three frequently asked questions:

- What new skills are being introduced to my child?
- Is my child ready to learn these new skills?
- How can I help?

## How To Use This Book

This guide is for parents of children between the ages of 5 and 13. It's divided into sections appropriate to children in the following age groups, with emphasis on children 9–13*:

**5–8 years old**
**9–11 years old**
**12–13 years old**

At the beginning of each chapter, you'll find a discussion of the emotional changes children experience during the developmental stage discussed. Each chapter then covers specific skills appropriate for children at different ages:

**The Numbers Game** *(Mathematics):* Ages 9–11, 12–13
**The Plot Thickens** *(Reading):* Ages 9–11, 12–13
**Tell It Like It Is** *(Communication):* Ages 9–11, 12–13
**Midnight Oil** *(Study Habits):* Ages 9–11, 12–13
**I Can Handle It** *(Coping):* Ages 9–11, 12–13

*For parents of children 5–8 years old, considerable material is already available on activities that can be done in the home to reinforce basic skills. Some of these materials are listed under the title **HELP!** at the end of the guide, and some have been incorporated into the chapter on 5–8-year-olds. The chapter that addresses this age group provides only an overview of the emotional and academic changes of children.

Also each chapter has sections called **Happenings At Home**, which suggest activities you can do at home with your children. You might find other useful suggestions in the resource materials listed at the end of the guide under the title **HELP!** In addition, the chapter entitled **And The Answer Is . . .** has information appropriate to children from 5 to 13 years old. This chapter addresses computer literacy **(Programmed For Progress)** and taking tests **(Making The Grade).**

To get the most value from this guide, first read it thoroughly. Then reread the sections appropriate to your children's ages. Finally, become familiar with the activities suggested and begin to use them and others you think of that fit your family's schedule.

If you have an exceptional child *(one who has either learning gifts, or a physical or learning disability)*, you'll notice that this guide doesn't specifically discuss exceptional children. You can, however, modify the suggested activities to suit your child's particular abilities or disabilities.

All parents must become aware of their children's special talents or limitations, particularly parents of an exceptional child. Talk with teachers, get acquainted with adults who are gifted or disabled themselves, and learn about available resources and equipment. It's very important for parents to work with a disabled child to identify techniques that will be effective for helping the child to learn basic skills. Today, all disabled children have the right to participate in regular classes to the maximum extent possible that is appropriate for the particular child, with the parents participating in all placement decisions.[1]

The suggestions we've made so far are meant to help children with their academic and personal growth. Now, we'd like to make some suggestions that can be useful to you in your role as a parent.

The five points emphasized below can help you put your children's family, school, and social experiences into a realistic perspective. Research has shown that all of the five points are necessary for a child's balanced growth and development.

**Parents must provide discipline.** Children need to have limits set for both school and social commitments. Children will apply these guidelines throughout their lives in many areas of behavior.

**Regular communication** between parents and children can create an atmosphere that encourages all members of the family to share confidences and learn about each other. By talking and listening to your children, you help them develop respect for the opinions of other people, for new information, and for your parental decisions.

Parents must try to develop **motivation and positive self-concept** in their children. Your enthusiasm and enjoyment of life will provide encouragement to your children in many ways. Observing adults use their inner strengths to meet new situations and challenges helps children develop confidence in their own capabilities.

Whatever activities you choose to do with your children, your ability to enhance their basic skills will rest on your ability to be **consistent.** As parents, you must learn to share, teach, work, learn, and love consistently. However, being consistent doesn't mean being rigid. **Flexibility** is the hallmark of today's parents. It's the elastic that lets you structure a lifestyle for your children that can be stretched and molded to fit their needs and personality.

The purpose of this guide is to help parents understand their children as they progress through school, and to help make learning a more enjoyable, rewarding process for both parents and their children.

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[1]Section 602, Clause 19, Education of Handicapped Act as amended by PL 94-142, November 29, 1975, and the Regulations Implementing PL 94-142, Section 121(a) 345, "Parent Participation," August 23, 1977, Federal Register Vol. 42 FR, pp. 42474-42514.

# Discovery And Readiness: Ages 5–8

The world of children is filled with discovery. During the first four years, their fertile minds have been given concrete experiences from which they'll eventually draw abstract concepts. For example, "sit down," "stand up," "look up," and other such directions have introduced them to more than 50 basic concepts.

By the time children are 5 or 6 years old, their minds are often controlled by their own desires, fears, and fantasies, and the wonder of experimenting with the new skills they're acquiring. They like to imitate adults, and imitation is an important way for them to learn to think and understand. They also learn by picking up, playing with, and exploring objects and surfaces. These are the reasons that it's important for parents to set good examples and to provide new and different experiences for their young, school-age children.

At the age of 5, children participate fully in learning activities and can apply them to their world. Before taking a trip to the zoo, show your children a book with pictures of animals and talk with them about the trip. Once children understand what a zoo is, they'll have more fun seeing, hearing, and imitating the animals, and the trip will truly be a learning adventure. Use this technique for other cultural outings and experiences with your children of this age group.

Experiences at home, school, and in the community help children to classify objects. For instance, they learn that apples and cherries are fruit; hammers and nails are tools; and dolls and trains are toys. At age 6, most children can count in sequence and identify individual numerals on sight, but they may not be able to quantify yet — for example, to tell how many objects are on a table. This means that they may not yet understand the **meaning** of numbers, even though they can count.

Children of 6 and 7 have longer memories than 5-year-olds. Their ability to concentrate has improved. They don't have a complete understanding of the concept of time, however, and three hours of play, when they are enjoying themselves, may seem short. Remember that they understand only "now"; the past and the future are just beginning to have meaning for them.[2]

By the time children are 7 or 8, more dynamic things have happened. Children begin to make the important distinction between fantasy and reality. For example, they understand that Superman can jump off a roof without hurting himself, but that they can't. They also begin to understand the concepts of ownership and sharing — that they shouldn't take toys away from other children, but should ask for permission to play with them. These are important social concepts.

Another important change in children 7–8 years old is seen in their involvement in rules. At this age, they begin to understand that rules exist to keep order, to protect people *(including them)*, and to permit certain things to be accomplished.[3] They begin to test their new understanding of rules as things that can be changed sometimes through discussion. You'll hear **"Why?"** and **"Why do I have to?"** a lot from your children at this age.

It's easy to become impatient with the questions of children going through this stage, but it might help you to realize that their constant questioning is important in helping them to define the purpose and nature of rules and their part in being able to change rules. This is an exploring process that helps children learn to reason. Although they may challenge rules and show defiant behavior, children of 7–8 are usually interested in getting along with people — and they begin to learn that living by the rules helps them do so.

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[2]*Black Child Care*, James P. Comer, M.D. and Alvin F. Poussaint, M.D., Pocket Books, New York, NY, 1975, p. 138.
[3]Ibid.

As children progress through these stages, what academic skills are taught? Children in kindergarten through grade 3 are introduced to reading, writing, and mathematical skills. The period when your children are 5–8 years old is an excellent time to show them how much fun they can have using these new skills. Walks around the neighborhood, trips in the car, shopping excursions can all be used as learning experiences. Children can be taught to use the skills they learn at school in activities with their families and friends (see **Happenings At Home**).

Today, schools are giving more emphasis to mathematical skills, even in the primary grades. Let's review some of the math principles presented to children 5-8 years old.

In preschool programs and kindergarten, children often are taught to write the numbers 0 to 9; gradually, they are taught to identify these numerals. Children 5–8 years old begin to learn to recognize and identify numerals 0–100. In addition, they're taught the names and symbols for each number and how to put numbers in proper sequence.

As children grow, they learn to apply numbers to concepts of time and measurement such as days, weeks, and months, and inches and feet. They may also be introduced to geometric forms and shapes and their relationships to points and lines.

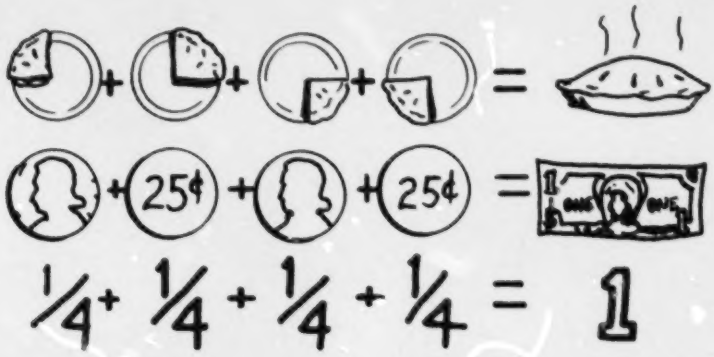
When they are ready to understand symbols, children learn the following mathematical concepts and symbols:

**Addition ( + )**
**Subtraction ( – )**
**Regrouping as used in addition and subtraction**
***(also known as "carrying and borrowing")***
**Multiplication ( × )**
**Division ( ÷ )**
**Greater than ( > )**
**Less than ( < )**
**Equal to ( = )**
**Cent (¢)**
**Dollar ($)**

During the years from 5 to 8, children are learning to work on quantitative problems within their daily experiences, and begin to arrive at solutions on the basis of their mathematical knowledge. General quantitative words such as **"much," "little," "many," "seldom,"** and **"often"** become part of their vocabulary. They also learn abbreviations for units of time and measurement *(hour — hr., feet — ft.)*.**"Number families"** are introduced during this stage. This math learning device uses several mathematical skills in relation to a particular number; for example,

$$6 + 6 = 12;\ 12 - 6 = 6;\ 12 \div 2 = 6;\ 2 \times 6 = 12.$$

Basic addition and subtraction skills are introduced in grade 1; however, children are often exposed to these skills before that grade. Basic multiplication and division skills are expected to be understood by the end of grade 3. Children in grade 3 should understand simple fractions up to $\frac{1}{10}$ and should be able to use them in real situations. They should understand, for example, that two halves of a pie make one whole. They should also be able to add and subtract simple common fractions with the same denominators (e.g., $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$), and to reduce the answer to common terms should the answer produce improper fractions and mixed numbers.




Parents — and all members of the household — have busy schedules, but parents certainly want to enhance the quality of living for their children. To realize this goal, you can encourage learning on a regular basis through family activities conducted at home. These activities will develop skills essential for life, and will provide some enjoyable experiences.

## Happenings At Home

Are your children beginning to read? If they are, they'll need to be able to recognize colors, shapes, numbers, and letters of the alphabet. Grouping similar objects, following simple directions, placing objects in a given order, and memorizing simple phrases and poems are exercises that form the fundamental reading, math, and communication skills. You can reinforce and strengthen these skills by trying the activities listed below. Also feel free to add to these activities or to arrange activities of your own. After all, you know your home and your children's abilities best.

- Ask your children to find three objects around the house that are shaped like squares.
- While taking a walk, have your children identify the number 1, 7, or 9 every time they see it.
- Ask your children to name each person in the house in order from the shortest to the tallest.
- Have your children organize their clothes in the closet by colors. Ask them to name the colors and to tell you how many different colors they have.
- Ask your children to name as many things as possible in the kitchen cabinet that begin with the **"T"** sound, **"C"** sound, **"R"** sound, etc.
- Using a calendar, let your children find the month and day for their birthday; when school begins and ends; and other dates important to them.
- Go to the library with your children. Let them select books of interest. Encourage them to read the books and provide help to them as they need it.
- Ask your children to cut the weather report and map out of the newspaper. Discuss both with them, and let them pick out clothes to wear to school for the next week that are appropriate to the weather forecast.
- Ask your children to identify a penny, nickel, dime, and quarter.
- Ask your children to write the numerals 1–25.

- Have your children help you to make the grocery list. Take them shopping with you, and have them write prices next to their favorite items on the list. Then have them add up the prices when they get home. This list can also be used for comparison shopping trips.
- Write down some simple math exercises and ask your children to answer them, e.g.,

$$\begin{array}{cccc} 1 & 2 & 3 & 1 \\ +1 & +1 & +1 & +3 \end{array}$$

- Have your children find smaller words within large words. For instance, let them write the word **"something,"** then ask them to find the words **"me," "some,"** and **"thing."**
- After watching a television program with your children, ask them to tell you what happened first and then next, through the progression of the story.
- Make a game of teaching your children opposites. First, pick a word such as **"up"** and ask your children to say the opposite word. Then, let them pick a word and you say the opposite word. You can also use this game for words that sound alike, such as **pail/pale**; **there/their**; **no/know**.
- While you're preparing dinner, let your children set the table. Ask them to count out the number of plates, forks, knives, spoons, napkins, and glasses needed.
- Help your children to compute the distance *(in blocks and miles)* from home to school, to the nearest store, and to the closest movie theater.
- Make flash cards of basic addition and subtraction facts and hide the cards among your children's toys, clothes, and other belongings. Then let them search for the cards and write the answers, and have a surprise for the children who give correct answers.
- Ask your children to write three sentences about their day in school. Be sure to check for capital letters, spelling, and periods.
- Suggest that your children select a favorite poem and memorize it. Then ask them to recite it to the family.

For additional activities focusing on math, reading, and communication skills for children 5–8, consult some of the books in the reference section entitled **HELP!** at the end of the guide.

In summary, children of 5–8 should be expected to accomplish some specific educational goals as they progress in school. Parents can help develop and reinforce these skills. Below are some goals that are identified in many school curricula for children to accomplish by the completion of grade 3.

- Develop proficiency in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and mathematics.
- Apply these skills in science, social studies, art, music, and physical education.
- Develop and maintain good physical and emotional health.
- Establish the ability to think and reason.
- Clarify values and be able to express knowledge, beliefs, hopes, and doubts.

The need for basic skills development at an early age is indisputable. It's important, however, that children learn to **enjoy** practicing reading and writing, speaking and listening, and math skills. Effective use of these skills is essential to their social development throughout their lives, and children who enjoy using their skills have an advantage. You'll notice that as your children's abilities improve in each of these areas, their ability to reason will also improve.

# The Dawning Of A New Age: Ages 9–11

For youngsters between the ages of 9 and 10, childhood is coming to a close and the adolescent years are approaching. These years are a relatively stable period of development, which may not be reached again for another 10 years. At this stage, children begin to show more self-control, are considerate of others, and tend to be extremely fair. They're less quarrelsome, less demanding of attention, and more self-reliant. They love outdoor activities and vigorous exercise, and are very attached to and enjoy being with the family. In short, children of 9 and 10 are a joy, and parents can relax a little and truly enjoy them.

By age 11, children are really beginning to **"feel their oats."** They're at the transition period from childhood to adolescence and are becoming increasingly independent. The calmness of the preceding two years is gone, to be replaced by restlessness, curiosity, and talkativeness. The 11-year-old fluctuates in behavior between a sophisticated young adult and a determined child, so that parents never know what to expect. It may surprise you to find out that children of 11 can be angels away from home, no matter how moody and changeable they are with their families. Teachers and adult friends may compliment parents on their well-behaved child, who the parents are convinced must belong to someone else.

By the age of 11, most children have learned the basic skills of reading and math and are using them outside of the classroom — for instance, by counting the change from a purchase or reading the directions for a game. These opportunities to apply skills in a practical setting make learning more interesting. Children of 9–11 may lack the persistence and concentration needed for high marks in school, but they like to learn. By the end of 6th grade, they're applying basic skills to more complex tasks.

During this period of change from childhood to adolescence, parents must exercise patience, although it will often be stretched as far as it can go. Children at this stage still have strong feelings of family loyalty, but these feelings may begin to be mixed with rebellious behavior. Although 11-year-olds often act up when required to do a job, they become friendly, outgoing, and ready to please as they near 12 and their feelings of self-confidence and self-worth grow. The sweet innocence of childhood that is typical of children 9–10 disappears, and parents must begin to let go.

## The Numbers Game (Mathematics)

Mathematical skills for children 9–11 become more fun and complex. After they memorize the multiplication tables, children work with multiplication problems like these:

```
  245        24
 x  3      x 36
-----      ----
  735       144
             72
            ---
            864
```

An example of a typical division problem for this age group is:

$$
\begin{array}{r}
19 \\
3\overline{)58} \\
-3 \\
\hline
28 \\
-27 \\
\hline
1
\end{array}
$$

**Answer: 19 R 1 R = Remainder**

Children also solve many word problems related to the math skills they're learning. They add and subtract basic fractions and decimals, work with traditional U.S. units of measurement — feet, inches, ounces, and pounds — and with metric measurements.

By age 11, most children have learned multiplication and division of whole numbers and have been introduced to the concept of place values. Even at this early age *(9–11)*, children realize that numbers extend into infinity.

Fractions, fractions, fractions! Specific focus is given to the many possibilities with numbers between 0 and 1. Decimals are another facet of fractions children of this age group begin to handle. Don't be surprised to hear your children talking about raising numbers to **"powers,"** discussing square roots, or extracting roots. In the curricula for children 9–11, just about everything that can happen to a number is introduced. Detailed study of the figures of basic geometry *(square, rectangle, and circle)* and corresponding concepts *(line measurement, area, volume, perimeter, and circumference)* is also included.

Ages 9–11

## Happenings At Home

Where does all this learning leave you? At home, trying to find out if your children really understand all they've been presented. Some of the following activities might help you discover the answer and spend educational time with your children, too.

- Have your children and a friend go to a neighborhood store *(or pretend that they do)* to buy five or ten stamps at 20¢ each, milk, and bread. If you give your children $5 and they and their friend split the change, how much will each one get? This kind of activity and discussion permits practice with addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.
- Have your children start and keep a savings account and compute their new savings balance using different interest rates.
- Have your children measure themselves and other family members using a standard tape measure and a metric tape measure.
- Have your children write their birth dates and those of family members using Roman numerals.
- Have your children help you measure ingredients while you're cooking.
- Have your children convert the size of milk containers and rooms, and the distance from home to school, to metric units.
- Using the newspaper, have your children compare baseball scores, batting averages, games won and lost, and other sports statistics.
- Play board games that use play money with your children to give them practice with math.
- On trips, have your children count items and give totals. For example, if they see seven red cars on the way to the bank and 13 red cars on the way home, all together 20 red cars are seen.
- Ask your children how many hours they spend in school each day. Have them figure out what fraction of a day that is and what fraction of a week they spend in school.
- Have your children wrap a piece of string around the lid of a jar. Mark the string where the ends meet. Using a ruler, have them measure the string to determine the perimeter of the lid.
- Have your children write the words for:

| | |
|---|---|
| **1,225** | (**e.g.,** one thousand two hundred twenty-five) |
| **800** | |
| **87** | |
| **387** | |
| **92** | |
| **524** | |
| **11** | |

- Several foods can be purchased by the dozen. Using division, let your children determine how many oranges, eggs, or doughnuts each person in the family can have from the dozen.
- Let the children measure pieces of furniture or draperies using a metric ruler. Then have them convert the measurements to inches, feet, and yards.

## The Plot Thickens (Reading)

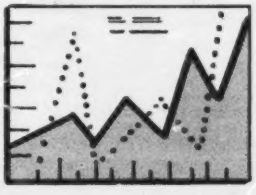
If your children are between the ages of 9 and 11, take some time to check their reading ability. Check to see if they:

- use several new words regularly. Some of the new words might be formed from one root word; for example,

produce
reproduce
production

- follow directions, place events in proper sequence, organize main ideas, and identify supporting details;
- can read and understand graphs, charts, tables, and figures, and can locate and use a table of contents, an index, an appendix, and chapter headings and subtitles.

MAP



CHART

| | CUPS | PINT | QUART | GAL. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| OZ. | 8 | 16 | 32 | 128 |
| CUPS | 1 | 2 | 4 | 16 |
| PINT | ½ | 1 | 2 | 8 |

TABLE

The skills listed above are presented to younger children *(5–8 years old)* to help them learn to read. For children 9–11 years old, these skills are used to help them **"read to learn."** They'll now use the fundamental skill of reading for enjoyment and information. Dictionary skills and work-study skills are emphasized as children read to locate, organize, evaluate, and retain information. As presented in the middle grades *(7th–9th)*, reading is applied to other content areas such as social studies and science.

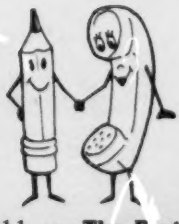
Through conscientious effort, parents can help their children to acquire the skill, the desire, and the habit of reading. You can encourage reading progress by letting your children select library books that interest them. Being interested in what they're reading about helps children absorb new ideas, recognize familiar words, and develop confidence in their ability to read.

Books are tools for getting to know people from other times and places and for experiencing fantasy, mystery, and adventure. Children 9–11 enjoy reading and love adventure stories. Parents should encourage this love for reading by keeping books and magazines, even comic books, around the house, and should see that their children have a library card and know how to use the library. With your library expeditions, you'll be introducing your children to a whole new world. Most important, you'll be helping them broaden their ability to understand themselves. Always emphasize the communication of ideas rather than the mechanics of reading. Sharing a book with your children or setting aside a special time for family members to read materials of their choice will encourage your children to read. Perhaps the most effective thing you can do is to set an example by reading regularly, yourself. Children should learn early that reading can be a pleasurable activity, not a chore.

## Happenings At Home

Reading activities conducted in school will emphasize the skills mentioned earlier in this section. There are other activities that you can do at home to encourage your children to read:

- Go to the library regularly and take your children with you.
- Help your children to begin a library of their own, perhaps by purchasing comic books or inexpensive paperbacks from bookfairs at school.
- Ask your children to select a favorite book, and a character from it, and act out the character's part.
- Encourage your children to retell, in their own words, stories that they've read.
- Share parts of the newspaper with your children and discuss what you read.
- Ask your children to read recipe directions out loud to you as you cook, or have them prepare a meal, or help you with part of a meal.
- Encourage your children to read and compare labels on shopping trips.
- When you're planning a vacation, have your children read about the route of travel, points of interest, climate, geography, and history of the place you're planning to visit.
- In the car, have your children find objects you pass that begin with the letters of the alphabet, in order. You can also have them name a word beginning with the last sound or letter of the previous word, for example, **cat—train—nails—sugar—rain.**
- To encourage reading for fun, ask your children to name their favorite magazine and plan to subscribe to it for them.
- While you're away from home, leave notes with instructions for your children. Vary the levels of difficulty and have them read the notes and perform the tasks.
- Ask your children to read comic strips, and invite them to read out loud to you.
- Suggest that your children write their own version of a comic strip using the existing pictures.
- Allow your children to read program descriptions in the Sunday television guide.
- Select or have your children select poems that rhyme, and each of you take turns reading them out loud.
- Introduce your children to riddles. Encourage them to tell you riddles and to make up their own.
- Have your children find one new word a week *(in a dictionary or in something they read)* and use it regularly. *(Parents can increase their own vocabularies the same way, and share a learning activity.)*



## Tell It Like It Is (Communication)

Children 9–11 offer an interesting challenge as they begin to strengthen their communication skills. Communication is the exchange of ideas through listening, speaking, reading, and writing. *(For reading skills appropriate to ages 9–11, see* **The Plot Thickens,** *p. 20.)* Children will continue to develop proficiency in these communication areas during this period. School assignments will begin to require subjective and thoughtful responses. Although the talkativeness of children 9–11 may make it hard for you to encourage good habits in all communication skills, their increased attention span will reassure you that they do have a capacity for listening.

## Listening*

Listening is viewed as the first communication skill children develop. First they listen, then they speak, read, and write. In grades 4, 5, and 6, your children will be working on the following skills:

- paying attention,
- following directions,
- coping with difficulties independently,
- memorizing and recalling information,
- estimating and predicting probable results and outcomes,
- organizing information,
- detecting relationships and classifying objects,
- identifying main ideas and supporting details,
- inferring information not explicitly presented,
- relating new ideas to personal life experiences,
- expressing events or experiences in a clear and effective manner,
- doing critical thinking.

When children are 9–11, listening is their major method of gathering new information. Sometimes no matter how much you try, however, the message you send is not the one your children receive, and vice versa. Various distortions may occur during the listening-speaking phases of communication. These distortions, which can alter what your children hear, can happen for any of the following reasons:

**Attitude Cutoff** — Children may have a strong negative reaction every time they hear a certain word, for instance, **"test."** This strong reaction may prevent them from hearing the rest of this message: "The **test** of any man lies in action."

**Motive Attribution** — Children may think, "Teachers just like to talk; they don't really expect me to listen the first time because they are going to repeat directions 10 times anyway."

**Organizational Mix-up** — Children may have trouble putting together someone else's message: "Did he say turn left, then right, then right, or . . . ?"

**Self-Preoccupation** — Children may be so busy forming a reply that they never hear the message.[4]

You can probably remember a personal experience that resembles each of these descriptions. These distortions sometimes occur with older children and adults, too.

## Speaking

The skill most akin to listening is speaking. The words children hear and understand form their basic vocabulary. From this basis, they learn reading and writing skills.

Since children learn to speak from what they hear, it's important for them to have the opportunity at home to listen and talk to other family members about day-to-day occurrences. Sharing their own experiences and opinions at home gives children of this age group a feeling of belonging and strengthens their own self-image.[5]

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*Listening and speaking are essential communication skills. This chapter has been written with the understanding that children who are deaf and/or mute should be taught and encouraged to use alternative methods of communication. Remember that although the methods may change, the principles of communication will remain the same.

[4]*Children Learn to Communicate*, Sara W. Lundsteen, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1976, pp. 81–82.

[5]*Parent Handbook*, Title II, Basic Skills Program, Ball State University, Muncie, IN, 1981.

These early adolescent years are a time when children become very aware of the opinions and attitudes of their peers. They rely on the advice of their friends, and often spend a great deal of time talking with one another. Being able to speak easily boosts children's sense of self-worth. At this stage, they become aware that oral communication is a very important way of relating themselves to the world—good speakers get along better socially.

Although hearing correct speech is important, in reality everyone uses different language patterns to relate to different groups. For example, with friends and family you may use slang or other informal speech, but for a job interview, you use more formal speech. It's important to realize that children must be taught early when to use the different speech patterns. You can do this by carefully monitoring the listening experiences of your children and by noting and explaining inappropriate speech when it occurs.

More important, parents should strive to establish an atmosphere that stimulates conversation among all family members. This effort may challenge your own listening abilities; it will convey the valuable feeling of open communication. If your family speaks more than one language, you should encourage use of all family languages in conversations at home. The key to speaking comfortably and well is having something to say and being given a chance to say it. Be sure to let your children share their experiences.

## **Happenings At Home** (Listening and Speaking)

Below are different kinds of activities that can be carried out with your children to promote good listening and speaking skills.

- Give your children oral directions while they're cooking, to give them practice in listening for important information.
- Have your children give oral directions to you while you're cooking, to give them practice in speaking clearly and effectively.
- Give your children the task of answering the phone and taking messages. Begin by having them only repeat the messages and then gradually help them learn how to take down names and numbers and eventually to write the messages.
- Discuss your day with your children and ask them to talk about theirs.
- Give your children two or three chores to do and list them in sequence by giving ordered directions: **"First do this, then do that."**
- Ask your children to sing the lyrics from a song that's playing on the radio.
- Make up a phrase or sentence. Say it to your children, and ask them to think of a word that rhymes with the last word you speak.
- Let your children make a tape recording of themselves reading a short story or part of a well-liked book. Afterward, have them listen to the tape and evaluate themselves.
- Encourage your children to memorize and recite a poem or short story.
- Ask your children to read a newspaper or magazine article or short story out loud.
- Let your children pick a new word each week, find its definition in a dictionary, and use it at least once a day in a sentence.
- Have your children evaluate a television show they've just watched for correct grammar, and talk about their favorite character and the main idea of the show.

## Writing

Writing is the skill that combines listening, speaking, and reading abilities. It taps children's capacity for abstract thinking and requires them to learn to memorize, recognize, discriminate, and recall ideas.

Writing is a developing process. Children of 9–11 are still experimenting with it and are fascinated by seeing their own ideas on paper. They should be introduced to the following stages of the writing process.

**Prewriting Stage** — This is when writers think about the topic, plan what they'll write, gather information about the topic, and make an outline.

**First Draft Stage** — Often called the **"discovery"** draft, this is when writers put their thoughts on paper in rough form without worrying about punctuation and grammar until later.

**Revision Stage** — This is when writers review what they've written for grammar and punctuation, and for organization of thoughts.

It's important to remind young writers that they should feel free to review and revise what they've written at any time during this process. They may even start all over again if they choose to do so.

When children are 9–11, the school program begins to require them to write reports for which basic research and analysis skills are necessary. At the same time, new home and community experiences expand their vocabulary skills, and they begin to understand how to use punctuation to clarify their written thoughts. By the age of 11, children often view writing as a new form of self-expression.

Parents must encourage their children to practice writing skills at home. You can encourage their writing without making it a chore by asking them to help with activities around the house. Below are some suggestions for doing this.

### Happenings At Home (Writing)

- Encourage your children to write letters to their relatives regularly.
- Ask for your children's help in keeping a grocery list or contributing to a family "things to do" list.
- Write often yourself when your children can watch. Try to ensure that some of your writing is creative.
- Encourage other family members to write personal messages to each other.
- Show your children samples of written work developed by family members and discuss them.
- Ask your children to write a poem about something they like or dislike.
- Encourage your children to start a diary or notebook of thoughts *(and remember, this is personal; no peeking).*

## **Midnight Oil** (Study Habits)

The excitement of learning begins at infancy and progresses during the early elementary school years. For children of 9–11, the perception of the world is broadened as they learn to classify objects, determine the order of things from smallest to largest or darkest to lightest, and begin to reason logically. When you talk with children in this age group, you'll probably notice that their **"reasons"** and perceptions are based on things that they've experienced personally. Their memory of all sorts of things seems faultless.

These new abilities offer parents an excellent opportunity to begin establishing good study habits. The school subjects that your children deal with at this age are essential to their future academic success. For this reason, you should establish the pattern, environment, and schedule to introduce your children to good study habits.

### Study Place

Children 9–11 will usually have one to two hours of homework every day, and it's important that they have a regular **place** to do their homework and to study. A place with few distractions that can be available whenever they need to study is ideal. Independence and self-motivation are characteristic traits of children at this age, so be sure to involve your children in choosing and setting up their own study place. Some possible study places are:

- a desk or table in their own room.
- a kitchen or dining room table, when it's not being used by others.
- a table or desk in the basement or family room.

Be certain that the lighting and heating are adequate for your children's study area. Ask what materials or equipment they need for study, such as paper, pencils, a ruler, a calculator; then encourage your children to store these supplies in or near their study area.

## Study Time

Establishing a regular **time** for study is also important. At this stage, most children will accept study time in their personal routine. The actual time selected for study isn't as important as setting aside a specific time to study every day. Some parents who work prefer to have their children begin to study as soon as they come home from school, seeing this as a way to make sure the studying is done and their children are kept busy during a time when there's little supervision.

If your children are cared for after school someplace other than your home, you can still encourage them to use part of that time for study. Discuss with the adult responsible for your children's care how you'd like them to spend that time. For example, you might ask that they devote the first hour to study, and the rest of the time to social activities.

Some people suggest that the time immediately after school should be reserved for play, because children need to work off energy after being in school all day. Again, the best time for study is whatever fits your children's personality, preference, and household duties. Your children's study time should be planned accordingly. Let your children choose the time they think is best, as long as they abide by it and it's convenient for the family's schedule. Children benefit from being given the responsibility of making decisions that affect them, and they'll be more inclined to study regularly if they have a say in the time chosen.

Children also should have a time for television watching; however, parents are strongly advised not to let their children watch television before they begin to study—they may become tired and unable to concentrate well. Instead, you may want to let them study for an hour after dinner and then watch some television. Remember, this decision should be based on the family's routine, to suit everyone's needs best and to help your children learn that all family members should be considered in decisions that affect the family as a whole.

## Study Schedule

After you and your children have set up a general study place and time, the next step is to develop a specific study **schedule**. To do this you should discuss homework with your children's teacher to determine how much time the children should spend each day completing assignments. Be sure to include children in setting their schedule. As mentioned, children appreciate feeling that they are involved in controlling their own time. Explain some of the benefits of having a schedule. For example, the schedule will give them more free time and they'll enjoy free time more because they won't be worried about homework they haven't done yet.

When developing the schedule, ask your children about each subject and work with them to determine how much time each subject needs. More time should be allotted for any subjects in which they're not doing well.

The schedule you develop might be divided into these time frames:

| | |
|---|---|
| **English** | **25 minutes** |
| **Math** | **30 minutes** |
| **Social Studies** | **25 minutes** |
| **Spelling** | **15 minutes** |
| **Science** | **25 minutes** |
| **Total time:** | **2 hours** |

Next, ask your children how much total study time they think is necessary each evening. Be sure to consider any study time they may have in school. Then, you and your children should begin to fill in their schedules. This process should be followed with each of your children who is 9 or older. All children should have their own schedule posted where it can be seen easily. To lessen distractions, you should encourage all your children to study at the same time. A sample study schedule is included on the next page.

Listed below are some important guidelines to keep in mind when you're filling out the schedule:

- Block out all weekly activities including school, religious, and special interests like Scouts.
- Block out **"special"** television shows. If your children have several favorite shows each night, you may want to require that they pick a **"number one"** favorite. This process helps children learn to make difficult decisions, such as which shows to give up when they want to watch them all.
- Discuss how much study time is needed per evening. Children with study halls or homerooms should have time they can use at school to do part of the homework.
- Let your children decide when they'll study in the blocks of time remaining. Encourage them to think about how hard it is to do homework late in the evening when they're tired. The idea is to guide your children gently into making wise choices.
- Remember that your children themselves must agree to this schedule. Ask them what they think will happen if they don't follow the study schedule.
- Put the schedule where it can be seen easily.
- Be prepared to adjust the schedule if it doesn't seem to be working.

Here's a sample schedule to use as a guide for helping your children develop their own individual schedules.

**NOTE:** See back of book for blank schedules that you can fill in yourself.

| | SUN. | MON. | TUES. | WED. | THUR. | FRI. | SAT. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AM. 9 | FAMILY ACTIVITIES | SCHOOL | SCHOOL | SCHOOL | SCHOOL | SCHOOL | TV | AM 9 |
| 10 | | | | | | | DANCE | 10 |
| 11 | | | | | | | CHORES | 11 |
| 12 | RECREATION | | | | | | RECREATION | 12 |
| P.M. 1 | | | | | | | | P.M. 1 |
| 2 | | | | | | | | 2 |
| 3 | | CHORES | PRACTICE | CHORES | PRACTICE | CHORES | | 3 |
| 4 | DINNER | PLAY | PLAY | PLAY | PLAY | PLAY | | 4 |
| 5 | STUDY | DINNER | DINNER | DINNER | DINNER | DINNER | DINNER | 5 |
| 6 | READ | STUDY READ | STUDY READ | STUDY READ | STUDY READ | STUDY READ | T.V. CHOIR | 6 |
| 7 | TV FAMILY ACTIVITY | | | | | | FAMILY ACTIVITY | 7 |
| 8 | | TV | TV | TV | TV | TV | | 8 |

SAMPLE

## Study Methods

Teaching your children good study **methods** early in their school careers will ensure effective study. No matter what the subject is, children should read the instructions and assignment thoroughly first. Check to see that they understand the directions. If they anticipate any problems, encourage your children to discuss them with you before doing the assignment. A notebook divided by subject will also be helpful to your children by reinforcing the information as they write it down, and by giving them a reference source when they're studying nightly or preparing for a test.

Work with your children to help understand the difference between reading a chapter for pleasure and reading for study *(grades 4–5 are early enough to explain this concept).* Tell them that when they're reading for pleasure, reading **once** is enough, but that studying means reviewing something **several times** to make sure the brain understands and remembers what's read.

You can also help children learn **how** to study. If they own their own textbooks, you should teach them that if they mark the important parts, they'll only need to review those points when they're preparing for a test.

Consider reinforcing the study of certain subjects by giving your children related experiences at home or in the community. For example, a good science fiction book or movie might discuss some basic science and math principles.

If you're the parent of an 11-year-old, you'll find that your involvement with your child's study will be a bit different from when your child was 9 or 10. As mentioned, 11-year-olds can be characterized as self-assertive, talkative, stubbornly resistant to control, and argumentative. Peer pressure will play a large part in their attitudes and social activities. On top of these difficulties, it may seem as though they've just discovered the radio or record player, since it's always played extra-loud.

Although these characteristics appear negative, there are ways to channel the resulting behavior into productive study habits. Let's start with the fact that most 11-year-olds enjoy school. Learning becomes a competitive activity at this age, and parents can take advantage of this fact by using innovative and creative methods to encourage study. For instance, they can invite their children's friends over to study and turn some of the homework activities into competitions and games. Under proper supervision, group study activities can be effective at this age. Motivation is a key word for children of 11. It's important to think about nontraditional ways to motivate children at this age to study, because, even though they enjoy **school**, they don't necessarily enjoy **studying**. If you've been using unusual study techniques and have a study schedule already, you should have less difficulty in getting your 11-year-old to study.

Parents should also help their children to do their homework and study assignments, but remember that if you help too much, you'll be doing the work instead of your children. If a study assignment seems particularly difficult for your children, have them write questions in their notebook to discuss with the teacher the next day. At 9–11, however, children have a fairly strong capacity to persevere, so be sure to give them a chance to struggle with study problems by not encouraging them to give up too soon.

As parents, you should focus attention on whether your children understand the concepts they're studying. Selecting the right answer doesn't necessarily mean that your children have absorbed the information that they'll need to accomplish more complicated work. Be sure to discuss homework assignments and classwork with your 11-year-old. It's also a good practice to review completed homework assignments each evening; this should help you monitor your children's study schedule.

Children at this age are not self-directed. The initiative for study can be sustained by using techniques that are interesting. Your children can use supplemental books — their own or books from the library — about particular topics that explain or reinforce class assignments. Visits to the art gallery, museums, or historic spots also permit children of this age to visualize concepts and ideas. Any such methods help make studying more enjoyable. Other conventional study methods include:

- using sports and other games for studying math and science concepts.
- writing stories and plays to reinforce basic and early creative writing skills.
- performing skills or dramatizing stories to practice oral communication skills and improve memory.
- taking group excursions to cultural and historic places.
- using toys that allow children to build or construct objects.

Remember that 11-year-olds are on the brink of adolescence, and that reactions and emotions are often out of their control. Your biggest job with children of this age is to offer them several options for handling their educational and familial responsibilities. A study schedule that they've helped to develop and a study place that they've made their own will provide some latitude. Even if you instilled the study habit in your children when they were younger, you may now need to establish the fact that their study is **"their"** responsibility, just as the work you do is yours. Let them know that your review of their assignments will be an opportunity for them to discuss their work with you and that they should ask you for help if they have trouble with an assignment.

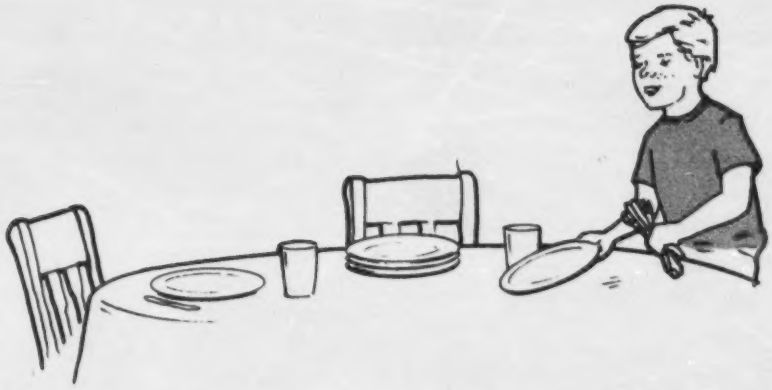
## I Can Handle It (Coping)

Children of 9–11 are beginning to develop a sense of themselves as separate individuals within the family. They need opportunities to develop their sense of independence while learning to assume responsibilities as family members. This is a period for parents to consider expanding the number and kinds of tasks their children do to help out at home. Those tasks should be easy ones, such as emptying the trash, setting the table, making their beds, and cleaning up their rooms.

Play is a primary motivation for children 9–11, so keep in mind that they'll view chores as an interruption of play, and that satisfactory completion of the chores may sometimes be a source of friction.

At ages 9–11, children like to try a lot of things, but seldom see the need for continuity. They make the bed beautifully Monday and Tuesday, but they don't see why they should continue making the bed for the rest of the week.

You should realize that children of this age aren't necessarily being defiant when their angelic behavior stops; it's often just the curiosity, energy, and restlessness of this age. Keeping this in mind, you should be flexible in assigning responsibilities, and when possible, work with your children. For instance, have one child set the table while you're cooking dinner, so that your tasks are related and you can talk to each other while doing them.



Friends are important to children of 9–11. They love to play with children their own age. They enjoy forming clubs and doing things in groups. During these years play is used to build social relationships. This is an ideal age to encourage participation in social and community groups. Children of 9–11 can begin to develop leadership qualities and to learn how the democratic process works through participation in these groups.

Parents should begin to give their children ages 9–11 a little freedom. Excursions to the library, to the neighborhood store or shopping center, to a matinee, or to skating rinks are welcomed activities for youngsters at this age, giving them outlets for their energy and opportunities to experiment with independence within the bounds of safety.

Children of 9–11 are very family-oriented; they really enjoy being with the family. By this age, they have begun to develop a real sense of responsibility as members of the family. They're generally eager to take an active part in the daily family routine, and they can be truly helpful family members. This is an excellent period to begin involving children in family decisions and family responsibilities.

At 9–11, children can help with planning menus, reading recipes, preparing simple meals, and doing the grocery shopping with you. They can be given responsibility for answering the telephone and taking brief messages. They're good at keeping track of things, know what to do in an emergency, usually handle situations in a level-headed manner, and can find their way around in strange places. Let them help you to plan family trips, projects, and entertainment. These activities help children of 9–11 to apply the basic skills they've acquired in school to the practical side of life, while making a real contribution to the family they so love.

Since family is so important to this age group, this is an excellent time to discuss with your children various types of families. Children need to learn that families live together, work together, share joys and sorrows, and support each individual member as he or she tries to adapt to life. They also need to recognize that there are many kinds of family structures.

At the end of the 9–11 stage, children are moving into adolescence and need more freedom, within stated parental limitations. This is the time to begin giving your children more responsibility, with guidance. For instance, given a menu, children of 9–10 can help plan a menu, but 11-year-olds love to prepare dinner. Also, it is appropriate for children aged 9–10 to shop or see movies with their parents, but 11-year-olds are ready to enjoy the freedom to go shopping or to the movies with their friends, and don't object to parents dropping them off and coming back for them at a specific time.

At 11, children need more opportunities to learn to handle money. They should be given opportunities to help plan family budgets. They should also have an allowance and be encouraged to seek opportunities to earn their own money and save for something really special that they want. Babysitting, yard work, and small household tasks are ideal assignments for 11-year-olds who want to earn money.

In summary, children of 9–11 are coming to the end of a stage in their development, whether they're fully aware of it or not. They're beginning to learn to handle limited amounts of money, to read signs and directions, to relate to different kinds of people in different settings, and to appreciate themselves as family members and as unique individuals.

This is a special period in children's development, a time for parents to relax and enjoy. You can almost see your children becoming young adults right before your eyes. So, during these years, the key advice for parents is to relax, be supportive, and enjoy their children.

# Who Am I? Ages 12–13

All of a sudden, parents of children 12–13 discover that their **"babies"** are gone and they're living with young adults, because by the time children reach this stage, adolescence is well under way. Although children of 12 and 13 are very reflective and go through periods of moodiness, silence, and withdrawal, this gives way to a friendly, cooperative, outgoing manner by the time they're 14. In general, children 12–13 are dependable and adaptable.

Thirteen can be a trying year for both adolescents and their parents, but it helps all concerned to remember that 14 is right around the corner. Children of 13 face a year of complex changes involving the mind, body, and personality; they are in particular need of parental tolerance and sympathetic understanding. At age 13, children use mirrors a lot to learn how other people see them. This is not vanity, but a tool for self-discovery and the development of self-assurance. As all of the areas of development begin to come together, 13-year-olds become confident, self-reliant, and generally happy 14-year-olds.

Children of 12 and 13 are more discriminating in their choice of friends and more mature in their attitudes toward adults and family members. Although at this age, they still spend most of their time with friends of the same sex, they're definitely aware of the opposite sex, and their activities often include both boys and girls. There's still very little dating as such, but spontaneous parties are common. The role of parents is one of guidance and supervision at this time.

Sometimes at this age, your children need you just to listen when they feel like talking. At other times, you'll have to encourage them to talk about a variety of subjects that affect their lives. These topics may include male and female sexuality, drug and alcohol abuse, depression, gambling, and ways of handling peer pressure about these issues. This is also the time to increase your children's awareness of ways they can take care of themselves when they're out on their own. Having a ready ear will be as important to them as hearing your own viewpoint.

Both 12-year-olds and 13-year-olds generally enjoy the school environment. They're interested in learning, love facts and figures, enjoy discussions, and have a tremendous ability to absorb knowledge. They're enthusiastic about life and are extremely curious both in and out of school. At this age, children begin to apply more conceptual thinking to all their subjects. They don't like to have teachers treat them like babies, and prefer those who are firm, yet understanding and humorous. They need some opportunity for leadership in the classroom, and some freedom to move about, because they're very active physically.

Because children 12–13 love competition, they learn a lot through games — spelling bees, dictionary quizzes, and geography games. These kinds of activities can be used to great advantage with this age group. At home, games like Scrabble, Boggle, Password, Monopoly, and all kinds of card games are excellent learning tools. Children in this age group love good stories and plays, and adults in the home and the school should build on this interest.

By this age, children are applying skills and techniques introduced in earlier grades to advanced levels of math *(algebra, geometry)* and language arts *(reference work, creative composition)*.

## The Numbers Game (Mathematics)

Children of 12–13 are challenged with many new experiences. Developmentally, they face emotional and physical changes that bring new responses and reactions. Academically, they face new concepts that require more concentration and better application of basic skills. School curricula for math in grades 7 and 8 generally include the following concepts:

- percentages and their relationship to common and decimal fractions,
- ratios and proportions,
- the meaning of **π (pi)**, and its numerical equivalent,
- advanced forms of linear measurement, including the circumference of circles and the perimeter of various polygons,
- altitude of geometrical figures,
- mathematical agreements and rules that lead to hypotheses and conclusions, and basic procedures for testing both,
- additional units of measurement including rods, miles, square miles, acres, cubic yards, longitude, and time zones, and,
- the relationship between mathematics and science.

You should be aware that your children are now being presented with concepts that are made up of all of the basic skills they encountered in the earlier grades. Math skills from the foundation for many of the daily business transactions of adult life. A primary objective of most school curricula should be to teach children 12 and 13 how to apply these skills in real-life situations. Parents can support this goal by complementing their children's math studies with exercises in "consumer math." What is consumer math? It's any mathematical activity associated with purchasing functions, such as those in:

**insurance,**
**budgeting,**
**taxation,**
**buying and consumer credit financing,**
**interest rates, and**
**investments.**

## Happenings At Home

Some consumer math activities your children can do to reinforce their math skills are listed below.

- Planning for the family's grocery needs is a task that can involve the entire family. Certainly, children of 12 or 13 can help plan the meals and list needed household items. Suggest that they use the weekly newspaper advertisements to calculate the approximate food costs. Be sure that they determine the bars of soap, quarts of milk, and dozens of eggs the family will need until the next shopping trip.
- As you make monthly or weekly bill payments, invite your children to help you plan the family household budget. For example, ask them to review the utility bills *(electric, telephone, gas, and water)* for the past two months and estimate how much the total utilities will cost during the next month.
- As you balance your checkbook monthly, let your children be a part of the process. Explain how you balance your checkbook.
- Give your children a project to list ways that multiplication can be used in banking and financial transactions.
- Preparations for family trips can be fun when everyone is involved in the planning. Let your children collect available bus, train, or plane schedules to plan a family trip and decide which method would be the most economical way to travel. Ask them to determine all of the expenses to be considered, such as gasoline, hotels, and meals.
- Have your children list a group of friends. Then have them draw a circle and use it as a pie graph to show what percentage of their friends do chores, what percentage visit other friends, and what percentage go to the movies on a Saturday.
- Using kilowatts and cubic feet measurements as shown on the utility bills, encourage your children to estimate next month's gas or water bill.
- Have your children figure out how many gallons and liters of gasoline the family car can hold.
- Apply basic arithmetic, multiplication, division, and fractions to demonstrate their uses with federal and state income tax forms. The Internal Revenue Service will provide samples of completed forms with all the numbers filled in. Working with your children to complete your sample forms can help familiarize you with the process, too.

- Have your children investigate book or record clubs and figure the monthly and yearly costs as well as the advantages and disadvantages of joining.
- Let your children write or call an insurance company to request a sample policy application form. Help them to compute the family's monthly and yearly rates for auto, home, and life insurance.
- Suggest that your children visit or call a car dealership, select a model they like, and visit a bank to request a loan application for practice in computing the quarterly interest rates on a balance of $2,000 or $5,000. Also let them compute the monthly costs for owning and operating a car. *(Don't forget to include estimated weekly gas, maintenance, inspection, and insurance expenses.)*
- Ask your children to select an entire household of furniture and pretend they can purchase it with a credit card. Discuss the interest rates and finance charges with them and let them compute the costs of their purchase using the credit card system.

## The Plot Thickens (Reading)

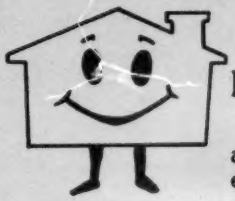
Parents should be aware of the fact that the reading habits of adolescents, like most of their other activities, are influenced by their need for independence and self-discovery.

During grades 7–8, your children will be developing a working knowledge of and beginning to expand the following reading skills:

- reading aloud with understanding,
- gaining understanding and meaning from context clues,
- identifying main ideas and supporting details,
- evaluating ideas and concepts, and distinguishing between fact and fiction,
- drawing conclusions based on adequate information,
- increasing the use of synonyms and antonyms,
- understanding the effects of prefixes and suffixes on word meanings,
- expanding reading vocabulary through broadened reading experience,
- separating words in syllables correctly,
- using the dictionary, thesaurus, encyclopedia, atlas, and other reference books appropriately and effectively, and
- reading for a variety of purposes.

In grades 7 and 8, classroom reading activities generally focus on the introduction and comprehension of broader and more difficult curriculum content. Parents can help their children in these grades increase their reading skills by:

- helping them to develop positive feelings about themselves,
- giving them the motivation to succeed and the belief that they can,
- providing them with as many varied experiences as possible, and
- helping them to maintain good study habits.



## Happenings At Home

The activities listed here are simply suggestions. You can develop additional activities which may be better suited to your own circumstances, environment, and children.

- Ask your children to read selected articles from the newspaper to you while you prepare dinner.
- Ask your children to use cookbooks to plan and prepare family meals.
- Encourage your children to read for a blind or elderly person on a regular basis.
- Ask your children of 12–13 to read bedtime stories to younger children in the family.
- Have your children fill out different types of applications—job, driver's license, apartment lease. *(Samples are usually available at no cost from libraries and appropriate offices.)*
- Most cities and towns have special events and monuments associated with their history. You can take advantage of these to spark your children's interest in reading through research activities. Take your children to a museum, art gallery, or historical place of interest.
- Encourage your children to interview several people or review old newspapers and city records to find out more about your town.
- Encourage your children to try out for a part in a play at school, at the recreation department, or at another drama center, and to study the part they want most.
- Reconfirming a positive self-identity is crucial at this age. Look for reading materials that talk about individuality and human potential. Encourage open discussion about these books that will permit your 13-year-old to express his or her own views.
- Children 12–13 begin to spend less time watching television; generally, you can use this opportunity to encourage more reading.
- Begin a reading contest among your preteens and include their friends. See which children can talk about three new books that they read during the month. Further encourage the contest by having mysteries and adventure stories available at home.
- Encourage your children to read magazine articles and stories about young people like themselves. If possible, let your children select a **"teen"** magazine and subscribe to it.
- For your 13-year-old, hobbies may become important. Have plenty of reading materials available concerning that particular hobby.
- Have your children buy songbooks or sheet music with the words to their favorite songs and learn them.
- On gift-giving occasions, find a book that relates to sports, facts and figures, or history to give to your 13-year-old.
- Challenge your children to read the classified ads of the newspapers to identify local job possibilities.
- Continue to discuss with your children books that you are reading.

These are, of course, just some of the reading activities that youngsters can do at home with the help and encouragement of parents. Their purpose is simply to get children to read, and to enjoy reading, by exposing them to a wide variety of reading materials, written in different styles and at different levels of difficulty.

## **Tell It Like It Is** (Communication)

Communication is a combination of four language arts skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing *(for reading, see **The Plot Thickens**)*. To communicate effectively, children must acquire these skills, in stages, depending on their age and maturity. By the ages of 12 and 13, children should be able to listen carefully, understand the message that is being conveyed, and sort through the various meanings suggested by tone, facial expression, and other subtleties. They should be able to express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and concepts with creativity and ease, through both the spoken and the written word.

The role of parents is to provide their children with as many opportunities as possible to develop, practice, and sharpen the skills involved in effective communication *(see **Happenings At Home**, for this section)*. In grades 7 and 8, most children should be able to:

- use a larger and more refined vocabulary for oral and written communication,
- arrange ideas in sequence,
- compose a written piece for a specific purpose and audience,
- listen to a speaker and interpret what's said,
- use both language and gestures to speak effectively,
- express themselves effectively in both speaking and writing, using compound and complex ideas,
- rank items in order of importance,
- understand the importance of **"point of view"** *(theirs and other people's)* as it affects oral and written expression,
- use exaggeration *(and other special techniques)* as communication tools,
- anticipate audience reaction to the choice of a specific word or phrase,
- draw on past knowledge to interpret new concepts,
- record and rearrange ideas to gain a new point of view,
- prepare effective oral and written arguments, and
- take accurate notes quickly.

In order to develop these and other communication skills to an effective level, youngsters must have opportunities to practice them. In the section on effective communication for children 9–11, it was pointed out that many people use different language or speech patterns with different groups; for example, casual with friends and family, and formal with teachers and job supervisors. This is particularly true of adolescents, whose conversations with their friends often seem to be conducted in a foreign language.

It's important for parents to recognize that the use of different language styles is not only acceptable, but sometimes necessary. If children are to develop effective communication skills, however, they must learn the difference between styles of speech, and in which situations each is appropriate. Parents can be extremely helpful in teaching their children to develop good judgment in their methods of communication.

Parents should be able to communicate with their children. You can begin by learning to listen to them; by taking a sincere interest in them, their lives, and their activities; and by talking with them in as open and honest a manner as possible about your adult fears, problems, struggles, and dreams. Young people take pride in being allowed to share in the world of adults, and such sharing on the part of parents shows respect for their children which, when they're 12–13, will go a long way toward keeping the lines of communication open.

## Happenings At Home

The following suggested activities are intended to help children develop effective communication skills; to help them recognize the need to use their knowledge and skills appropriately to achieve success in life; and to keep communications between parents and their children open at a very critical time in their youngsters' development.

- **Television** — If your children enjoy television, let it work for them as a learning tool. Be selective in what your children watch, and whenever possible, watch television with them. Then ask questions about the show *(children of 12 and 13 love being* ***"experts"****)*: Is this a true story? What might have been the reason for that action? How does the character feel? What would you have done?

- **Telephone** — Telephone talks with friends help develop your children's ability to converse comfortably and effectively, and are an enjoyable form of skill-building. If you're a working parent, call your children in the afternoon to see how their day was, give instructions for dinner, check on the progress of their homework, and just generally **"chat."** Remember that each conversation should have time limits to force your children to evaluate what's most important for them to say in a short time, and to protect your time.

  Keep a pad and pencil near the telephone, and encourage your children to write down telephone messages as they receive calls.

- **Tape Recorder** — This age group is a great one for fantasies, especially around the field of entertainment. Let your youngsters use a tape recorder to record and listen to themselves. This is an excellent skill-builder for both speaking and listening.

- **Diary or Journal** — In this age group, children tend to be very private persons as they continue to develop their sense of self. Examining their own thoughts and feelings is a preoccupation of most adolescents. You can help your children to turn daily worry and review of themselves into valuable experience by encouraging them to keep a diary or journal. The keeping of a diary or journal of thoughts, feelings, ideas, and experiences provides an excellent opportunity to practice writing skills and serves as an outlet for adolescent emotions. Although a leather-bound book equipped with a lock and key is lovely, a spiral notebook works just fine. Remember to respect your children's privacy by not prying into what they write unless they offer to share it with you. The feeling of being adult enough to have a private possession is important to young adolescents.

- **Creative Expression and Drama** — These are activities that allow children an opportunity to express themselves through spoken words and body language. Many schools have debate clubs where groups of students discuss different sides of a given topic. Schools, recreation departments, and community centers generally have drama groups and/or classes in creative expression.

  Parents of children this age can also use the practice of musical instruments and other artistic activities to further math and communication skills, while encouraging creativity. Some children of 12–13 may even begin to compose songs, write lyrics, develop choreography, or write plays, poems, and stories.

  At home, family games of charades or pantomime can be great fun for both parents and children. Write the names of favorite people, movies, books, television shows, and special events on slips of paper. Then have each person take a slip and act out what's on the slip, while the rest of the family tries to guess who or what it is.

  Another fun family activity that's also a good skill-builder for oral communication is storytelling. In storytelling, one person starts telling a made-up story out loud, other people pick up the plot and use their imagination to add to it, and the last person makes up an ending.

- **Word Games** — Children 12–13 generally like word games. Several commercial word games on the market such as Password, Scrabble, and Boggle are excellent for increasing vocabulary.

- **Home Bulletin Board** — A bulletin board, placed in a convenient spot, gives family members a space to leave notes for one another; to post newspaper and magazine articles of interest; to hang a calendar on which each family member can write appointments and upcoming events; and to display art and other schoolwork. The home bulletin board is an indirect means of encouraging practice in writing and reading skills.

- **Family Newsletter and Pen Pals** — Both of these activities can be sources of great fun, while providing excellent opportunities for children to develop writing skills.

  Once or twice a year, children can put together a family newsletter to bring distant relatives and friends up-to-date on the family. Have each child write pieces of family news to be included in the newsletter, make copies, and mail them. You can be a valuable advisor during this activity if your children ask for your help.

  There are many sources of pen pals, some in the United States, and some in foreign countries. A pen pal not only encourages letterwriting, but provides a source of friendship for children that often develops into a lasting relationship. Writing to children who live somewhere else also teaches children to respect people with backgrounds different from theirs. Cousins of generally the same age can also make good pen pals.

- **Family History** — Does your family have a written history? Your children 12 to 13 years old can take on this project. Give them a start by letting them interview you about your life and the times in which you grew up. Next, suggest that they talk to friends, relatives, and older people in the community. From their research, encourage them to develop a written history. Their own interest could lead to the development of a family tree.

- **Other Activities** — Children of 12 and 13 should practice writing letters, both business and personal. You can assist by suggesting that they write to:

  - departments of commerce in cities or states that interest them to request general information about living and working in that area,
  - state and federal departments of labor to obtain information on one or two occupations of interest to them,
  - one or two colleges, universities, or vocational schools of their choice to request catalogues and other information,
  - a friend or relative who has moved away, or a friend or relative who is special, or
  - their Congressman about a particular bill or issue.

## **Midnight Oil** (Study Habits)

Many 12-year-olds enter grade 7 in a junior high school, a different building from the one they've known for years. The new routine of changing classes and the interaction with new teachers and students may cause some disruption in your children's school adjustment. Become familiar with the new school staff. Encourage your children to take notes regularly on each school subject.

To support study for children of this age, parents must be flexible. Try to use competitive sports and games as physical and educational outlets. For example, be sure that your children know how to compute and keep score, and can talk and write about the important rules of a favorite sport or game. Begin to explore ideas on the probability of **"odds"** of winning, or losing.

These are ways to relate your children's interests to school lessons. Many adolescents consider homework an imposition on their social activity. Parents have to see that the assignments are completed. To do this, you may need additional flexibility. For example, instead of requiring that your children finish all studying before going roller skating, it might be better to permit your children to do 30 minutes of study before going skating, and then finish their homework when they return home. This schedule will give them an outlet for their energy and encourage them to be task-oriented during the time that they are studying.

Many changes are taking place in the lives of children 12–13. Their physical and emotional changes will demand more of your attention, which is why it's so important to set up and maintain a study routine before this period. However, even though you may already have a study routine, you should be as flexible in this area with your youngsters as you are in others. Your flexibility — within limits — will help to make this confusing period an easier one for your children and for yourself.

Study habits for children 12–13 are basically the same as for those 9–11. Since children may develop a special interest in reading at this age, however, parents should seize this opportunity to make available a variety of reading materials.

A very important contribution to study habits is motivation, which is often described as a need or a desire that causes a person to act. To help motivate your children to study, you can identify areas of interest that relate to their school program. Teachers generally will assume responsibility for stimulating their students' interest for learning in the classroom; parents must assume the responsibility for encouraging study at home.

Appropriate motivation for your children will vary according to their age and personality. You'll need to match methods with their interests. Most children want to know, **"Why do I need to study?"** Your answer should include the immediate and future benefits of study, and the immediate confidence that they'll have from being well-prepared for class activities and tests.

Always remember that as your children are growing they're learning and changing, and that their motivation and enthusiasm for study will be affected by their growth.

## **I Can Handle It** (Coping)

By the time children are 12–13, the foundations of their moral and ethical character have been laid. Although there will be times when you'll question whether these children really belong to you, you should remember that at some time in the not-too-distant future, they will pass through this awkward stage and emerge as adults.

Children of 12 and 13 are experimenting with their individuality. Their early ventures into the world of adulthood are both exciting and frightening. They're seeking freedom from parental control, yet with the growing peer pressures of this age, they desperately need the safe haven of

parental restrictions. For example, suppose you work. Your children's friends know that your house is unsupervised after school, and they suggest a beer party there one afternoon. Your children may know that this is wrong and not really want to be involved, but they don't want to lose their friends or their place in the group. Often they appreciate being able to say, *"Hey, that sounds really neat, but my mom has a rule that no one but people in our family can be in the house when she's not there. She'd be sure to find out, and I'd be grounded until I was 21."* Usually, this kind of statement is enough to dampen their own and their friends' enthusiasm and cancel the plan. Just as important, it allows your children to do what they think is right without losing face with their friends.

At this age, children are also very aware of clothes and are fad-conscious. They need their own money to budget and use. You might consider giving children 12 and 13 a raise in allowance, and encouraging them to find a steady babysitting or lawn-mowing job to earn extra money. Suggest that they sit down with you and go over the family budget to get some ideas about setting up their own budgets. Let them do some of their own shopping and some of the family's shopping, so that they begin to understand the value of money and the costs of basic items they use in their day-to-day lives.

At this age, youngsters become even more aware of their positions as responsible members of the family than they were at ages 9–11. They're eager to be given responsibilities at home and in the community. Since children of 12 and 13 are very tolerant of and work well with younger children, this is an excellent time to explore opportunities for them to become responsible for supervising and interacting with young children through Scouting, religious, and camp activities.

From 12 to 13, children are eager readers as a rule, and parents should encourage this activity. You can do this by making newspapers, magazines, and books available for your chidren to use, and by providing time and space for your children to read in privacy. It's also important to give children of this age books that support their efforts to develop their sense of self, their moral character, and particularly their ability to make ethical decisions — an appropriate challenge for youngsters at this age. Novels and biographies are types of books that are appropriate and are interesting to young people.

By this stage of life, children have begun to develop their comprehension and analytical skills. They need — and parents should provide — opportunities to be actively involved in life at a very practical and realistic level. They need to observe the behavior of different people as they interact with one another. In doing so, children 12–13 can begin to analyze people's behavior in a variety of situations, and to develop a better sense of themselves and a greater understanding of others.

You should give 12-year-olds and 13-year-olds as much space to grow and develop as possible, but make them aware of your interest in and understanding of them, so that the lines of communication can be kept open. Parents must watch carefully, ever ready to guide and help when necessary, as their children struggle through this difficult transition from childhood to young adulthood.

# And The Answer Is . . .

Two subjects that have not been discussed thus far but are very important to children in school today are computer literacy and testing. Although neither is a basic skill, both are important facets of basic skills education for today and tomorrow.

## Programmed For Progress
## (Computer Literacy)

Computer skills, sometimes called **"computer literacy,"** vary considerably in complexity and type, according to the equipment used and the results desired. It's becoming increasingly important for parents of children from 5 to 13 years old, who probably have little or no computer training themselves, to understand the basic computer skills their children may be taught in school.

Computer literacy has been called the **"fourth R"** and is now considered just as basic as reading, writing, and math skills. An **Education USA** special issue on technology says, **"By the year 2000, as many as 65% of the work force may be employed in jobs involving the processing and communication of information. Like today's functional illiterate, times for those not trained to use technology will be tough, indeed."**[6] Whether parents like it or not, the age of computers is here and has affected or will affect their lives in many forms.

**"Computer literacy,"** which is the ability to do things with computers, should not be confused with **"computer science."** Think of computer literacy as the knowledge and skills the average person needs to work effectively with computers. Your children of 12–13 may already have skills in computer usage and know the limitations of computers. They may also be familiar with such phrases as:

**hands-on,**
**print-outs,**
**hardware and software packages,**
**on-line.**

If your children's school is using computers in the classroom, you may be worried or confused about their effects on learning. Computers don't replace the personal touch of a teacher. They do, however, reinforce the basic skills taught, by allowing children to work at an individual level appropriate to their skills. For example, in teaching long division, the teacher introduces the basic skills involved. The children are usually in math groups based on their skill level. In the introduction of long division the steps are:

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[6]*Education USA*, published by the National School Public Relations Association, Arlington, VA, January 24, 1982 (Volume 24, number 19), p. 148.

***Step 1:*** **Divide 2 into 4**

$$2\overline{)47}$$

***Step 2:*** **Multiply 2 × 2**

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ 2\overline{)47} \\ 4 \end{array}$$

***Step 3:*** **Subtract 4 from 4**

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ 2\overline{)47} \\ 4 \\ \hline 0 \end{array}$$

***Step 4:*** **Bring down the second number**

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ 2\overline{)47} \\ 4 \\ \hline 07 \end{array}$$

***Step 5:*** **The steps are then repeated with the next number or numbers.**

$$\begin{array}{r} 23\ \text{R}\ 1 \\ 2\overline{)47} \\ 4 \\ \hline 07 \\ 6 \\ \hline 1 \end{array}$$

During the acquisition of this new skill, children might have different problems with any of the steps. The computer can pinpoint the steps that are presenting problems and give the children additional practice in those areas. Computers are also being used to improve communication skills — to build vocabulary, improve spelling, and practice language arts skills.

Computers don't replace teachers; they help teachers address the individual needs of children. They're also valuable in identifying and assisting exceptional children, those who are academically gifted or those who have learning disabilities. When computers are used as an instructional aid at the elementary school level, children's learning achievements may improve, and the time it takes to learn may decrease. This may be true for elementary math, reading, and writing skills.

If your children use a computer in their classroom, familiarize yourself with what they're doing. You should call, write, or visit the school for information. The number and kinds of computers used by education systems vary greatly; however, the public library can help you find information on the kind of computer your children use.

Whether you're interested or not, you should become familiar with basic information about computers. Otherwise, as your children become more skilled in the use of computers, you may find it more and more difficult to talk with them about their schoolwork and to understand what they tell you.

## **Making The Grade** (Test-Taking Skills)

Testing has become a regular part of the educational process; however, most parents aren't knowledgeable about testing purposes, uses, or procedures. Parents are really the first to test their children's skills. They begin testing their children's development at home, by asking their infants to respond to them. Asking a baby to "walk to mama" is actually a parental test. In daily interactions with their preschoolers, parents often ask them to recite their ABC's or to count from 1 to 10. Busy parents may ask their children to help by getting certain items, counting out a certain number of vegetables, or reading the comics or paper out loud. These are all informal tests conducted by parents.

During kindergarten and elementary school, informal methods for testing progress in school are extended to include recitation, oral question-and-answer periods, and basic paper-and-pencil exercises. It's at this stage that many children begin to feel some anxiety about taking tests. This may be a result of their personality, or it may be response to frequent questions and drills at home. Even at this early age, some children have begun to view tests as things that expose their inabilities rather than demonstrate their abilities.

More formal classroom and standard tests are introduced to children during the early elementary years. At this point, parents often become involved and begin to show concern about the kinds of tests being given and their children's test performance. Parents should ask questions about school tests.

If you don't know, ask a school official:

- What is the purpose of the test?
- What is being tested? Who is being tested *(group or individual)*?
- How will the results be used?

Schools today are using many kinds of tests to evaluate children's knowledge, their progress in the classroom, and their potential for learning. Controversy has arisen over each of these kinds of tests. A common criticism is that certain tests are biased. For example, intelligence quotient ***(IQ)*** tests are often considered to be unfair to children whose cultural background is not white Anglo-Saxon Protestant. *(There is still considerable argument over whether intelligence is the result of heredity or environment.)*

Parents should have the opportunity to make suggestions about the use of tests in their children's schools, and all parents should know what kind of tests, quizzes, and examinations their children's teachers design and give in the classroom. You should contact the guidance counselors or teachers to ask the questions suggested above, and you should request specific information about the tests your children are given. You should ask the teacher:

- How often are tests given?
- How long is each test?
- How will the tests be graded and rated?
- Are make-up tests possible?
- How much of the total grade is determined by scores on these tests?

Parents should support their children in the test-taking process and encourage them to study and ask questions so that they understand the content of each class session. You should emphasize the fact that there's no need for your children to be nervous or anxious about class tests if they prepare adequately. Encourage them to find out from the teacher exactly what subject matter will be included on the test and what class notes or highlighted sections of books they should study before the tests. Proper study habits are very important in preparing for tests *(see **Midnight Oil**)*.

Parents are entitled to know the results of tests administered to their children. When standard tests are given in school, you should ask:

- What kind of test is it?
- What is the format *(multiple choice, true-false, essay)*?
- How will the results be used?
- At what time of day are the tests usually given?
- Who administers the tests?
- How are the tests scored, and by whom?
- To what extent are the results made available to parents, teachers, and local or state education personnel?
- Do the test results become part of the child's permanent records?

Parents of children with disabilities should be especially involved in these matters. Tests should be given in a manner that's appropriate for youngsters with disabilities — for instance, in large print or Braille — and with extended time limits if the necessary special methods are time-consuming. Similarly, tests should measure what they claim to measure, rather than merely measure the disability itself — for example, an oral conversation test is unlikely to give a fair picture of foreign language achievement if the student has a severe speech impairment. Finally, remember that no single test may be used to determine whether a child should be in a special program for handicapped students. That decision must be based on a careful general evaluation, and parents must agree to allow their child to participate in such a program.[7]

In summary, parents can best help their children prepare for tests by encouraging them to keep up with daily assignments, get plenty of sleep, and ask questions about unclear concepts. They should not, however, place unnecessary pressure on their children to achieve on tests, or encourage them to study too hard. This only causes anxiety in children, and won't help children to do well on tests.

The important thing to remember is that parents and children should view tests as one measure of educational progress. Test results should serve as the basis for planning home and community-based experiences that will reinforce children's educational gains.

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[7]Section 602, Clause 19, Education of Handicapped Act as amended by PL 94-142, November 29, 1975, and the Regulations Implementing PL 94-142, Section 121(a) 345, "Parent Participation," August 23, 1977, Federal Register — 2 FR, pp. 42474-42514.

# FINAL WORDS

In conclusion, there are three areas of emphasis that parents should remember:

**First,** parents should feel confident of their ability to help their children improve their skills. Most parents use basic skills concepts in their everyday interactions. You should begin to include your children in these tasks whenever possible.

**Second,** parents know their children better than anyone. This familiarity gives you a head start in planning activities that are relevant to your children.

**Third,** parents need to be willing to learn and to expand their own experiences. Children will follow the example set by parents in learning and in approaching new experiences.

The following section is provided to give parents additional sources for improving their children's basic skills. The materials listed in this section have been selected because of their usefulness and their accessibility to parents. This list is not all-inclusive by any means, but has been prepared to help parents devise learning activities they and their children can share at home.

The books are listed by subject area and are **not** separated into age groups, since many of them address basic skills for children 5 through 13 years old.

## Child Development and Parenting

**Adolescents,** Boyd R. McCandless and Richard H. Coop. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York, NY, 1979.

**Black Child Care,** James P. Comer, M.D. and Alvin F. Poussaint, M.D. Pocket Books, New York, NY, 1975.

**Bright Idea,** Dorothy Rich and Nancy Harter. The Home and School Institute, c/o Trinity College, Washington, DC, 1981.

**Calendar of Activities, Grades K Through 6, Indianapolis Public Schools,** Karl R. Karp, Superintendent of Schools, Indianapolis Public Schools, 1981.

**Career Education Resource Guide,** Dr. James E. Bottoms, Dr. Rupert N. Evans, and Dr. Kenneth B. Hoyt, editors. Careers Programs General Learning Corporation, Washington, DC, 1972.

**Career Education in the Middle/Junior High School,** Rupert N. Evans, Kenneth B. Hoyt, and Garth L. Mangum. Olympus Publishing Co., 937 East Ninth South, Salt Lake City, UT 84105, 1973.

**Child and Adolescent Development,** Sidney A. Manning. McGraw-Hill, New York, NY 1977.

**The Child and His Curriculum,** J. Murray Lee and Doris Lee. Appleton-Century-Crofts, Division of Meredith Corporation, New York, NY, 1960.

**The Developing Child,** Helen Bee. Harper & Row, New York, NY, 1980.

**Discover the Road to Success in Elementary School,** Valerie Churchman, Elizabeth Ring Conover, and Doris Ring Wright. Idaho School District No. 312, Title II, Basic Skills Improvement Program *(Grant No. G008004747, U.S. Department of Education)*, Shoshone, ID, 1981.

**Early Adolescence, Perspective and Recommendations to the National Science Foundation,** Prepared for National Science Foundation Directorate for Science Education, Office of Program Integration; for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 *(Stock No. 038-000-00390-9)*,1978.

**Families Learning Together,** The Home and School Institute, Washington, DC, 1980.

**A Family Affair: Education,** Dorothy Rich and Cynthia Jones. The Home and School Institute, Washington, DC, 1977.

**How to Father,** Dr. Fitzhugh Dobson. Nash Publishing. Los Angeles, CA, 1974.

**How to Live Through Junior High School,** Eric W. Johnson. J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia and New York, 1975.

**How to Parent,** Dr. Fitzhugh Dobson. Nash Publishing, Los Angeles, CA, 1974.

**Parent Participation — A Formula For Success,** series. Indiana Department of Public Instruction, Division of Reading Effectiveness, Room 229, State House, Indianapolis, IN, 1980.

**Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP), A Parent's Handbook,** Don Dinkmeyer, Gary D. McKay. American Guidance Publisher Service, Inc., Circle Pines, MN 50014, 1976.

**The Three R's Plus: Teaming Families and Schools for Student Achievement,** Dorothy Rich and Cynthia Jones. The Home and School Institute, Washington, DC, 1978.

**The University of Chicago Magazine,** Summer 1982, Felicia Antoneli Halton, Editor, *"All Our Children Can Learn,"* Michael Alper, p. 2. Chicago, IL, 1982.

**Youth, The Years from Ten to Sixteen,** Arnold Gesell, M.D.; Francis L. Ilg, M.D.; Louise B. Ames, Ph.D. The Gesell Institute of Child Development. Harper & Row Publishers, New York, Evanston, and London, 1956.

## Mathematics

**Building Mathematics Concepts in Grades Kindergarten Through Eight,** Edwin L. Hirschi. International Textbook Co., New York, NY, 1970.

**400 Group Games and Activities for Teaching Math,** Edward F. DeRoche and Erika Gierl Bogenschild. Parker Publishing Co., West Nyack, NY, 1977.

**Getting Involved: Your Child's Math,** Lucinda Lee Katz, Ph.D.; Judy David, M.Ed.; Barbara L. Levadi, M.Ed.; and Caren Saag Von Heppel, Ph.D. This series was developed by the staff of CRC Education and Human Development, Inc., a subsidiary of Contract Research Corporation, 26 Brighton Street, Belmont, MA, 02178, under Contract No. HHS 105-78-1026 for the Administration for Children, Youth and Families, 1978.

**Helping Children Read Mathematics,** Robert B. Kane, Mary Ann Byrne, and Mary Ann Hater. American Book Co., New York, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Dallas, and Milwaukee, 1974.

**Mathematics Their Way,** Mary Baratta Lorton. Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA, 1970.

**New Math for Adults Only,** Lola May and Ruth Moss. Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York, NY, 1966.

**The New Mathematics for Parents,** Ralph T. Heimer and Miriam S. Newman. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, 1965.

**Plus, A Handbook of Classroom Ideas to Motivate the Teaching of Elementary Mathematics,** Mary E. Platts. Educational Service, Inc., Stevensville, MI, 1964.

**Project Parent, Title II: Basic Skills Improvement Program: Parent Handbook*,** Ball State University, Muncie, IN, 1981.

**The Three R's Plus Teaming Families and Schools for Student Achievement,** Dorothy Rich and Cynthia Jones. The Home and School Institute, Washington, DC, 1978.

**Understanding the New Elementary School Mathematics: A Parents/Teachers Guide,** Francis J. Mueller. Dickerson Publishing Co., Inc., Belmont, CA, 1965.

**You Can Count on Mathematics: Developing Awareness and Mastery.** Indiana Department of Public Instruction, Division of Reading Effectiveness, Room 229, State House, Indianapolis, IN, 1981.

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## Reading and Writing, Speaking and Listening

**Children Learn to Communicate,** Sara W. Lundsteen. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1976.

**The Children We Teach,** Susan Isaacs, with introduction by Millie Almy. Schocken Books, Inc., New York, NY, 1971.

**Dear Parents — Help Your Child to Read,** Ellen B. Franco. American Book Co., New York, NY, 1972.

**Parent Participation — A Formula for Success — Building Blocks: Reading Readiness Activities.** Indiana Department of Public Instruction, Division of Reading Effectiveness, Room 229, State House, Indianapolis, IN, 1981.

**Elementary School Curriculum,** J. Michael Palandy. The Macmillan Co., New York, NY, 1971.

**English Language Arts.** Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, MD, 1965.

**Helping Kids Write,** Sara Baynem. Educators Publishing Service, Inc., Cambridge, MA, 1980.

**Home Ideas for Reading.** New Jersey Reading Association, Princeton, NJ, 1970.

**How to Help Your Child Become a Better Reader, Speaker, Writer and Problem Solver,** Margo Donovan. York College, City University of New York, New York, NY, in press.

**The Language Arts Handbook, A Total Communication Approach,** JoAnne C. Greenberg, M.Ed.; McCay Vernon, Ph.D.; Jan Hafer DuBois, M.Ed.; and Jan C. McKnight. University Park Press, Baltimore, MD, 1982.

**Listening Aids Through the Grades: 190 Learning Activities,** David H. Russell and Elizabeth Russell. Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York, NY, 1980.

**Listening Games,** Gay Wagner, Max Hosien, and Mildred Blackman. The Macmillan Co., New York, NY, 1960.

**Look What I Wrote,** Bonnie Miller. Ranger Associates, Manassas, VA, 1980.

**Promising Practices, In Pre-Elementary Right to Read Program.** U.S. Department of Education, Manual II — Ideas for Parents, Washington, DC, 1980. This series was developed by the staff of Children's (1st) First, Inc., of Washington, DC, under Contract No. 300-790-379 for the U.S Department of Education, 1980.

**Reading Skills Check List and Activities,** Walter B. Banbe, Ph.D.; Vasie Converse, Ph.D.; and Jerome Converse, Ph.D. The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., West Nyack, NY, 1976.

**A Sympathetic Understanding of the Child Six to Sixteen,** David Elkind. Allyn and Bacon, Inc., Boston, MA, 1972.

**The Teacher's Handbook of Reading/Thinking Excercises,** Dorothy Rubin. Holt, Rhinehart & Winston, New York, NY, 1980.

**The Three R's Plus: Teaming Families and Schools for Student Achievement,** The Home and School Institute, Washington, DC, 1978.

**Youth,** Arnold Gesell, M.D. and Louise B. Ames, Ph.D. The Gesell Institute of Child Development, Harper & Row, Inc., New York, NY, 1956.

## Handicapped Children and Mainstreaming

**Council for Exceptional Children Catalog.** Council for Exceptional Children, Reston, VA.

**Gifted Children Newsletter.** Gifted & Talented Publication, Inc., Sewell, NJ. Published monthly.

**New Directions for Parents of Persons Who Are Retarded,** Robert Perske. Avengton Press, Nashville, TN, 1973.

**A Resource Guide for Parents and Educators of Blind Children,** Doris M. Willoughby. Developed under the sponsorship of the National Federation of the Blind. National Center for the Blind, Baltimore, MD, 1979.

**Teaching Special Children,** Robert M. Smith, consulting editor. McGraw-Hill, New York, NY, 1976.

**"Update" Newsletter.** Council for Exceptional Children, Reston, VA. Published periodically.

**Your School Includes a Blind Student,** Doris M. Willoughby. Teachers Division, National Federation of the Blind, 1800 Johnson Street, Baltimore, MD 21230, 1981.

## Study Habits, Computer Literacy, and Test-Taking Skills

**Computer Town USA, News Bulletin,** Pat Cleland. People's Computer Co., 1982.*

**Computers in Learning Environments — An Imperative for the 1980s,** Dr. Ludwig Braun. Department of Technology and Society, State University of New York at Stony Brook, Stony Brook, NY, 1980.

**Crucial Issues in Testing,** Ralph W. Tyler and Richard M. Wolf. McCutchan Publishing Corporation, Berkeley, CA, 1974.

**Exploring With Computers,** Gary G. Bitter. Julian Messenea Publishers, New York, NY, 1981.

**A Handbook on Standardized School Testing.** D.C. Citizens for Better Public Education, Inc., Washington, DC, 1978.

**How to Study,** James E. Deese and Ellen K. Deese. McGraw-Hill, New York, NY, 1979.

**Parents' Guide to Understanding Tests.** McGraw-Hill, New York, NY, 1976.

**Tests and Measurements in Child Development: A Handbook,** O.G. Johnson and James W. Brommarito. Jossey-Bass, Inc., San Francisco, CA, 1971.

**Using the Computer in Education, A Briefing for School Decision Makers,** Paul G. Watson. University of Washington, Educational Technology Publications, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1972.

**Working With Parents,** National School Public Relations Association, Arlington, VA, 1979.

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